



McQueeny Earns 7th NMRA Certificate

It was announced at our January meeting that Jim McQueeny had earned his 7th NMRA AP Certificate which enables him to earn the Master Model Railroader Certificate. For a brief bio on Jim, see page 6.

Jim McQueeny was born in Chicago, Illinois and grew up in Elmwood Park. He has been involved in model railroading for over fifty years. Like many others, his first involvement came from a train set that he received as a Christmas present.

That set soon expanded into a layout on plywood in his bedroom. The layout's track contained some fiber ties, brass Atlas sectional track, and a ground cover that consisted of coffee grounds and fabric dye-colored sawdust. The motive power for this first layout was rubber band drive diesels and steam engine kits that he had to rivet together.

He still has the old steam engine kits, but the rivets have gotten too small to see. After moving to West Dundee with his wife, Jim built two layouts. These layouts shared time with raising his four children and his other hobbies, including car, plane, and boat modeling. The second layout that Jim built there served as a terrific source of therapy after he crushed his right hand in a molding press.

In 2002, after moving to Rockford, Jim contacted the NMRA and soon received one of the RRVD post cards, highlighting the next division meeting at Midway Village. When he arrived for the meeting, he was warmly greeted by Charlie Wickhorst and saw two great layouts after the meeting. Jim says that he could not imagine a better NMRA division to belong to, especially because of the wonderful members.

As time passed, he has become more involved in the RRVD and has participated in the NMRA Achievement Program, as well. Just over four years ago, long-time RRVD member, Gary Loiselle, gave him a copy of the requirements for the NMRA Golden Spike Certificate after Gary had visited Jim's current layout.

Gary gave him those requirements twice before Jim actually did anything with them! After Jim earned the Golden Spike certificate, he was already well on his way to earning other certificates. Guess that helping with train shows and NMRA clinic presentations do pay off! He now has earned seven out of the eleven certificates and qualifies for the Master Model Railroader certificate.

Jim finds it hard to believe that in an over 40-year-old division, he will be only one of three Master Model Railroaders in the Rockford area. Along with too many to name, he wants to thank Master Model Railroaders and RRVD members, John Mann and Marion Brasher, for their guidance and encouragement.

He has been influenced in the hobby by many of the past and present pioneers such as John Allen, John Armstrong, Lynn Westcott, Malcolm Furlow, John Olson, George Sellios and Dave Frary. Their influence is reflected in his layout that has a Western style, rather than a flat Midwest look.

In conclusion, Jim feels that, regardless of level of ability and modeling interests a person possesses, model railroading is the world's greatest hobby.